

## **Preliminary Scope and Process of HECB Review of Transfer and Articulation Policies and Practices**

July 2001

### **BACKGROUND**

At its May 30, 2001 meeting, the Higher Education Coordinating Board (HECB) took action (Resolution 01-25) to begin a review of current transfer and articulation policies and practices among the community colleges and universities.

This review resulted from the HECB's 2000 Master Plan directive to work with students, faculty and university and college administrators to identify barriers or obstacles to student learning and how institutions would respond to such obstacles. This review identified many potential obstacles; for some, specific plans for corrective action are already underway. Other barriers grew out of confusion or misunderstanding of current law or policy. But many other obstacles stemmed from problems with transfer and articulation.

Specifically, in the review process, stakeholders shared stories about the consequences of ineffective transfer and articulation policies or practices, such as students having to make up courses or take much longer to earn a degree. Other issues on transfer and articulation included:

- The need for a General Education Requirement (GER) Transfer Agreement among the four-year institutions;
- Ensuring the availability of lower-division course work for students attending the branch campuses and the need to reimburse the community and technical colleges for the cost of providing GER or other lower-division courses to students enrolled full-time at the branch campuses; and
- Credit transfer limitations resulting from designating community college courses as part of a technical curriculum.

Concurrent with the review of these reported obstacles, the Board also recognized that numerous transfer and articulation agreements have been and are being developed by various entities within the higher education community. Many of these activities are cooperative direct transfer agreements generated through the Intercollege Relations Commission (ICRC), such as the associate in arts degree and the two associate in science degrees. Other efforts originate through the Inter-institutional Committee on Academic Program Planning (ICAPP) or dual admissions/concurrent enrollment (e.g., University of Washington and Shoreline Community College). There are also individual institutional initiatives.

While supporting these efforts, the Board also recognized the need to understand these activities and agreements within the overall context of statewide transfer articulation policy and law and to assess how these efforts address the transfer and articulation problems reported to the Board. In this regard, the Board also concluded that quantitative information is needed to fully understand the magnitude and consequences of the transfer and articulation problems, thus allowing remedial efforts to focus on the areas of greatest need.

In response to these needs, a preliminary study framework is presented below. It is important to emphasize that, in accordance with Resolution 01-25, the preliminary study scope will be reviewed and refined through the collaborative study process discussed below.

## PRELIMINARY SCOPE

Four components to the study have been identified.

- A *chronology and summary of transfer and articulation law and policy* needs to be developed and reviewed with appropriate state policy-makers. This review will help clarify legislative intent and expectations concerning transfer and articulation.
- An *inventory of existing transfer agreements and agreements being planned* needs to be developed.
- The study should determine if *system-wide measures or indices of transfer and articulation effectiveness* could be developed and reported. This aspect of the study could include a review of how other states measure transfer and articulation performance.
- The study should identify the “gaps” between (1) existing policies, agreements, and transfer planning efforts and (2) reported problems, then advance *specific recommendations and plans to correct transfer and articulation deficiencies*.

## STUDY PROCESS

One approach to undertaking the study is to establish a Transfer and Articulation Policy and Practices Study Group. This group would be comprised of representatives of the public universities and colleges, the independent institutions, the State Board for Community and Technical Colleges, and the Council of Presidents. The group would be responsible for making the following recommendations:

- Refining and finalizing the study scope
- Reviewing current transfer articulation law and policy

- Compiling the inventory of existing and planned transfer and articulation agreements
- Reviewing possible quantitative measures of transfer and articulation effectiveness
- Recommending changes in policy or other administrative actions to correct existing problems

With respect to timelines, the Board could invite participation and convene the study group in **August 2001**. While the group would need to discuss the specific schedule of the study, initial milestones could be:

- Finalize study scope and schedule – by **October 2001**
- Complete the review of transfer articulation law and policy – by **November 2001**
- Compile the inventory – by **December 2001**
- Review quantitative measures – by **February 2002**
- Develop recommendations and submit final report – by **April 2002**